



State Rep. Mark Pafford  
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## Important Hurricane Telephone Numbers

**Palm Beach County Division of Emergency Management:**  
**(561) 712-6400**

[www.pbcgov.com/pubsafety/eoc/](http://www.pbcgov.com/pubsafety/eoc/)

**Hearing Impaired (TTY/TTD):**  
**(561) 712-6343**

**American Red Cross Greater Palm Beach Area Chapter:**  
**(561) 833-7711 Or**  
[www.redcross-pbc.org](http://www.redcross-pbc.org)

**Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department:**  
**(561) 688-3000 (non-emergency)**

**School District of Palm Beach County:**  
**(561) 434-8000 Or**  
[www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us](http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us)

**Palm Beach County Animal Care & Control:**  
**(561) 233-1200**

**Disabled Transportation Assistance:**  
**(561) 649-9848**

**Special Needs Shelter/Emergency Medical Services:**  
**(561) 712-6400**

**FL Department of Financial Services Hurricane Helpline: (800) 227-8676**

**Report power outages to FPL: 1-800-468-8243.**  
**Residents with questions before, during and after a hurricane should call 211.**



## Stabilizing Property Insurance Rates

The Legislature took modest steps this session to stabilize the property insurance market, ease rate hikes for many Floridians, and give all consumers new options for choosing a property insurance company of their choice.

Dramatic rate hikes for customers of state-run Citizens Insurance were set to go into effect January 2010. But under legislation passed during the session, those increases will be capped at 10 percent instead of increases of 40 percent and higher. This step should provide some comfort to home and business owners and bolster the actuarial soundness of Citizens' rates.

Still, major insurance reform remains undone and our state faces too many financial risks should a major storm come our way.

Florida's Hurricane Catastrophe Fund, which provides backup financing for private insurance companies, is not sufficiently financed --- and long-term fixes are needed. Although the so-called "CAT Fund" has approximately \$8 billion available, and could borrow up to \$8 billion more to cover claims, it still faces a potential shortfall of roughly \$12 billion should the state be hit by a major storm, a significant risk in light of the economy's current volatility.

Meanwhile, I am sorely disappointed by the Legislature's decision to stop funding the tremendously successful "My Safe Florida Home" program, which provides free home inspections and other useful information to consumers. If this program expires, I am concerned that the state would be ignoring its responsibility to protect Floridians.

# Rep. Mark Pafford's District 88 Update

2009

## From The Florida House Of Representatives

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

I am pleased to serve as your voice in the Florida House of Representatives at a challenging time for our state government.

The recently ended 2009 legislative session was one of the toughest on record. My priorities throughout the session were to focus on Florida's economic recovery, creating new jobs, public education, health care, public safety and fighting for middle-class families and those who need the services of our state.

In writing a new state budget, we faced a \$6 billion revenue shortfall. The Legislature responded by reducing programs and services, draining trust funds and increasing fees, many of which will impact working-class families. For these and other reasons, I voted against the budget because I don't think it adequately met our state's needs.

But I am pleased that I was one of the first in the Legislature to endorse the use of new federal economic recovery dollars approved by President Barack Obama and Congress that were used to help balance the proposed new \$66.5 billion state budget for Fiscal Year 2009-10.

This year, my colleagues and I in the Florida House of Representatives undertook a number of serious initiatives that will improve the lives of our friends and neighbors:

- ◆ In public safety, we championed legislative efforts to crack down on the illegal sale of prescription drugs, and we passed legislation to require law enforcement to provide victims of sexual battery with vital information about services.
- ◆ In the education arena, we won approval for a measure to engage more students in meaningful activities in their schools and communities. And we repeatedly demanded that education funding not be cut despite tough economic circumstances.
- ◆ Throughout the session, we fought for seniors and people who rely on health care services, and won approval for legislation to require Medigap coverage for certain patients needing dialysis or kidney transplants.

It has been a pleasure to serve you in the Legislature and I look forward to next year's session as well as your continued support.

It is an honor to represent our community in the Florida House of Representatives!

Sincerely,

State Representative Mark Pafford



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To subscribe to Rep. Pafford's monthly e-newsletter, please send an email to [mark.pafford@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:mark.pafford@myfloridahouse.gov) and type "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.

**On The Inside: Fighting for Education ▪ Working for Better Health Care**





# Rep. Pafford’s 2009 Legislation

My legislative career began in earnest in 2009.

As a freshman legislator, I supported several good bills that were approved after I worked closely with fellow members of the state House of Representatives and our counterparts in the Florida Senate.

In an effort to help reduce local government costs, I sponsored legislation to allow special districts to “piggyback” on competitively bid contracts for certain services and commodities that have already been bid by other governmental entities, such as state, county, city or other special district agencies. This legislation will result in cost and time savings for many local governments.

During the session that just ended, I also sponsored a House Memorial calling on the federal government to increase funding for home health services for seniors and those with disabilities. One of my most important priorities is to enable senior citizens and people with disabilities to receive care in their own homes.

I also was the House sponsor for Senate Bill 2430, which closes a loophole that allows some corporations to avoid paying an accurate documentary stamp fee for real estate transactions. I am pleased that the legislation was signed into law by Governor Charlie Crist, and I believe that closing this loophole will generate millions of dollars in new revenue to pay for crucial public services.

Working with members on both sides of the aisle, I was able to help amend the language of one of my bills into a bill that eventually passed. This legislation will help local agencies provide more housing assistance to the homeless by using certain housing assistance grants.

## Health Care

With the help of federal economic recovery funds, I am pleased that the Legislature met obligations to finance many crucial state and local health care programs. But I am deeply disappointed by potentially harmful cuts to programs that provide health services to Florida seniors.

Programs that may suffer include ones operated by the state Department of Elder Affairs. For instance, sharp cuts are made in the budget to the Community Care for the Elderly program, which helps many seniors remain in their homes instead of nursing facilities. Similarly, severe cuts will be made to state programs that provide in-home care and daily meals for the elderly, as well as special assistance to individuals and caregivers living with Alzheimer’s disease.

I am distressed by the decision to reduce Medicaid reimbursement rates to nursing homes and a cut to some health initiatives for minorities. But I am pleased by our successful efforts to fund the state’s Meds-AD program, which helps seniors purchase medications.

This year, the budget recognizes the need for increasing the number of nursing home diversion slots.



As many as 17,200 of Florida’s frailest elders, who would otherwise be served in nursing homes under Medicaid, will soon be able to receive services in their homes and communities.

Also, I’m grateful that budget cuts spared Florida’s very important Medically Needy program, which provides essential health care for low-income families

The new state budget also seeks to protect services for Floridians with developmental disabilities to ensure their quality of life. The budget also includes dollars to open a new Department of Veterans’ Affairs nursing home in St. Augustine.

# Education

I worked tirelessly alongside my colleagues in the Legislature to secure much-needed funds for Florida’s schools, teachers and students, and I am proud of our efforts.

I am pleased that the Legislature has put to use more than \$2 billion in federal economic recovery funds approved by President Barack Obama’s administration.

These dollars will help give schools and teachers the resources they need in hopes that we will one day have a world-class education system.

I hope that we can improve education funding. The proposed Fiscal Year 2009-10 state budget increases per-student spending only modestly, reaching a statewide average of \$6,873.

We can do better, especially considering Florida school funding has fallen since the Fiscal Year 2007-08 level of \$7,128 per student.

The proposed budget earmarks \$130 million to reward schools whose students score well on the FCAT exams. While it is important to reward good performance, I think we should also do more to help students at under-performing schools needing assistance.



## How we spend these limited education dollars is important.

Overall, I’m disappointed that the state is not meeting my expectations for adequately funding our schools. For instance, by delaying by another year the implementation of the voter-approved Class Size Amendment at the classroom level, the Legislature is making it more difficult to reach class-size goals in the years to come.

Our college and university systems also need our support. The total budget for colleges and universities will increase slightly, from nearly \$3.2 billion to a proposed \$3.4 billion in the year ahead. But the additional funding comes at a cost: higher tuition paid by our students and their families.

The proposed higher education budget raises university tuition by up to 15 percent a year and caps Bright Futures scholarships.

The move saves the state \$34 million but will cost students at least \$197 more per year at schools with 8-percent tuition hikes, and nearly twice that for students who choose schools that raise tuition by 15 percent.

